

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 HA-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08  
INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
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R 281456Z FEB 78  
FM AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5887  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RIO DE JANEIRO 0910

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS : PINT BR  
SUBJECT : THE RIO DE JANEIRO GUBERNATORIAL RACE

REFERENCE : SAO PAULO 0358

1. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT APPEARS PREPARED TO CONCEDE THE RIO DE JANEIRO GOVERNORSHIP TO THE OPPOSITION MDB WHICH IN RIO ALONE OF BRAZIL'S STATES ENJOYS A MAJORITY IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE WHICH WILL CHOOSE THE NEXT GOVERNOR. CURRENTLY, IT APPEARS THAT FORMER GOVERNOR CHAGAS FREITAS, NOTED FOR HIS LOYALTY TO THE REGIME, WILL RETURN TO POWER IN A COMPLEX ARRANGEMENT INVOLVING THE OTHER MAJOR MDB POLITICIAN, SENATOR AMARAL PEIXOTO, AND GEISEL PROTEGE HUMBERTO BARRETTO. END SUMMARY.

2. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY SAO PAULO, THE SELECTION OF INDIRECTLY ELECTED GOVERNORS WILL BE DETERMINED BY PRESIDENT GEISEL, GENERAL FIGUEIREDO AND THEIR KEY ADVISORS BASED ON WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS THEIR POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS IN THE FUTURE AND THE POLITICAL REALITIES PERTAINING IN EACH STATE. RIO DE JANEIRO STATE IS AN EXCEPTION TO THIS GENERAL RULE; IT IS UNIQUE IN THE UNION IN HAVING AN ELECTORAL COLLEGE WHERE  
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THE OPPOSITION MDB IS IN THE MAJORITY: THE MDB HAS 141 VOTES COMPARED TO ARENA'S 113.

3. AS A RESULT, THE PRESIDENTIAL DECISION GROUP, IN THE CASE OF RIO, HAS LIMITED OPTIONS BEFORE IT WITH RESPECT TO THE SUCCESSOR TO THE CURRENT APPOINTED GOVERNOR, EX-PETROBRAS VICE-PRESIDENT ADMIRAL FARIA LIMA (APPOINTED TO IMPLEMENT

THE MERGER OF GUANABARA AND RIO STATES IN 1975). THESE ARE:

(1) TO EXTEND THE MERGER ("FUSION") PROCESS BEYOND THE DATE SPECIFIED BY LAW AND THEREBY RESERVE TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THE RIGHT TO APPOINT ANOTHER GOVERNOR; (2) TO MODIFY THE COMPOSITION OF THE STATE ELECTORAL COLLEGE BY EXPANDING THE NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH MUNICIPALITY (ARENA HOLDS AN EDGE IN THE NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES CONTROLLED IN THE STATE); (3) CASSATE APPROXIMATELY THIRTY MDB ELECTORAL COLLEGE MEMBERS; (4) RESORT TO BRIBERY TO WIN VOTES FROM MDB MEMBERS OR TO ENSURE THEIR NONAPPEARANCE ON THE VOTING DAY; OR (5) TO ACQUIESCE IN THE MDB'S ELECTION OF A GOVERNOR, BUT ONE ACCEPTABLE TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

4. THE FIRST THREE CITED TACTICS ARE SUPPORTED BY SOME ARENA STATE DEPUTIES BUT ARE SO BLATANTLY MANIPULATORY THAT, IF EMPLOYED, THEY WOULD LIKELY HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON ARENA NATIONALLY. FOR THIS REASON THEY HAVE PROBABLY NEVER RECEIVED SERIOUS CONSIDERATION IN BRASILIA. THE PRESIDENT OR HIS SPOKESMEN HAVE REPEATEDLY STATED THAT THE POLITICAL PROCESSES WILL NOT BE MODIFIED BEYOND THE APRIL 1977 "REFORMS." GENERAL FIGUEIREDO IMPLIED THE SAME IN AN INTERVIEW GRANTED ON FEBRUARY 22 WHEN HE STATED: "THE MDB HAS CONDITIONS TO ELECT HIM (SIC GOVERNOR) AND ONLY THE MDB. IF IT WERE NECESSARY TO ELIMINATE THAT HYPOTHESIS, THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN DONE EASILY IN THE APRIL REFORMS. IF IT WAS NOT DONE, IT IS BECAUSE NOTHING IS STOPPING THE MDB FROM GOVERNING THE STATE." THE CONFIDENTIAL

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FOURTH TACTIC WAS HINTED AT BY GOVERNOR FARIA LIMA FOLLOWING A RECENT MEETING WITH GEISEL AND FIGUEIREDO, WHEN THE GOVERNOR INDICATED THAT ARENA SHOULD LAUNCH A CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR IN THE HOPE THAT SOME MDB MEMBERS OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE WOULD FAIL TO ATTEND THE CONVENTION OF THE COLLEGE. HIS STATEMENT BROUGHT IMMEDIATE AND ANGRY CHARGES OF CORRUPTION FROM PROMINENT LEADERS IN THE STATE MDB ORGANIZATION. AT THIS POINT, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO HONOR THE EXISTING RULES OF THE GAME AND TO PERMIT A MDB GOVERNOR IN THE STATE (OPTION 5 ABOVE), ALTHOUGH IT REMAINS UNCLEAR WHETHER OR NOT ARENA WILL, NONETHELESS, PUT FORWARD A CANDIDATE.

5. THE MDB MEMBERS OF THE STATE'S ELECTORAL COLLEGE ARE DIVIDED INTO TWO PRINCIPAL FACTIONS FOLLOWING THE LEADERSHIP OF SENATOR AMARAL PEIXOTO AND EX-GOVERNOR CHAGAS FREITAS. THE FORMER, A LONG-TIME POLITICAL LEADER IN THE PRE-MERGER STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO AND THE SON-IN-LAW OF GETULIO VARGAS, RETAINS AN EXTENSIVE FOLLOWING IN THE MAJOR CITIES OF GREATER RIO (BAIXADA FLUMINENSE-NITEROI-SAO GONCALO). THE LATTER, THE 1971-1975 GOVERNOR OF GUANABARA, ROSE TO POLITICAL PROMINENCE IN THE POST-REVOLUTION PERIOD AFTER ACQUIRING THE RIO NEWS-

PAPERS FORMERLY CONTROLLED BY HIS POLITICAL MENTOR, SAO PAULO POPULIST ADHEMAR DE BARROS. DURING HIS PERIOD AS GOVERNOR, HIS LOYALTIES TO THE REVOLUTIONARY REGIME WERE UNQUESTIONED -- AN ATTITUDE WHICH HAS LED TO MANY PROBLEMS BETWEEN CHAGAS AND THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE MDB AS WELL AS THE "AUTENTICO" WING OF THE PARTY OF RIO DE JANEIRO. A MDB REPRIMAND FOR HIS NEWSPAPERS' 1975 ENDORSEMENT OF CASSATIONS LED TO HIS RESIGNATION FROM THE PARTY (HE REJOINED LAST YEAR). THE MERGER OF GUANABARA AND RIO INTO THE NEW STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO ALSO BROUGHT HIM AND THE POLITICAL MACHINE HE CONTROLS IN RIO DE JANEIRO CITY INTO DIRECT RIVALRY WITH AMARAL PEIXOTO AND HIS MACHINE IN THE INTERIOR OF THE STATE. HIS CONFLICTS WITH AMARAL PEIXOTO IN THE 1976 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS LED HIM TO SUPPORT ARENA CANDIDATES IN SOME AREAS AND RIVAL MDB CANDIDATES

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IN OTHERS. (BOTH SCORED SIGNIFICANT VICTORIES IN THESE ELECTIONS WITH CHAGAS SUPPORTERS WINNING A MAJORITY IN THE RIO CITY COUNCIL WHILE AMARAL'S SON-IN-LAW WON ELECTION AS THE FIRST DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYOR OF NITEROI, FORMERLY CAPITAL OF OLD RIO STATE.)

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5888  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RIO DE JANEIRO 0910

6. THROUGH THE MEDIATION OF MDB VICE-PRESIDENT AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER TANCREDO NEVES, CHAGAS AND AMARAL REACHED AN AGREEMENT IN JULY, 1977 TO END THEIR FACTIONAL CONFLICT,

OBVIOUSLY WITH THE 1978 ELECTIONS IN VIEW. WHILE THE TERMS OF THIS AGREEMENT HAVE NEVER BEEN MADE PUBLIC OR REVEALED TO CONGEN OFFICERS IN CONTACTS WITH BOTH FACTIONS, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE TWO LEADERS DECIDED TO DIVIDE UP VARIOUS OFFICES IN THE 1978 ELECTIONS OR NOT TO COMPETE WITH ONE ANOTHER. DESPITE UNHAPPINESS IN THE RANKS OF FOLLOWERS OF BOTH, THE AGREEMENT APPEARS TO BE STICKING.

7. AT THIS POINT, IT APPEARS THAT CHAGAS WILL EMERGE AS THE DULY ELECTED MDB CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR AT THE PARTY CONVENTION IN JUNE. BASED ON PRESS SOURCES AND PERSONAL CONTACTS, EVIDENTLY CHAGAS AND AMARAL HAVE AGREED TO DIVIDE KEY OFFICES AS FOLLOWS: GOVERNOR -- CHAGAS; VICE-GOVERNOR -- AN AMARAL APPOINTEE IDENTIFIED WITH SENATOR SATURNINO BRAGA (SEE EIGHT BELOW); INDIRECT SENATOR -- AMARAL. THE PRESS HAS SPECULATED THAT CHAGAS HAS ALSO AGREED THAT WHEN GOVERNOR HE WILL MAKE FINANCIAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE TO AMARAL'S SON-IN-LAW AND POLITICAL HEIR, NITEROI MAYOR WELLINGTON MOREIRA FRANCO. CHAGAS HAS ALSO AGREED (BUT PUBLICLY DENIED) TO LEND HIS TWO NEWSPAPERS' SUPPORT TO THE

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CANDIDACY OF GEISEL PROTEGE AND FORMER PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SPOKESMAN, HUMBERTO BARRETO, FOR FEDERAL DEPUTY ON THE ARENA SLATE IN THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS. (THE APPARENT CALCULATION IS THAT BARRETO, SHOULD HE RECEIVE ABOUT 150,000 VOTES, WOULD ENABLE OTHER ARENA CANDIDATES TO WIN ELECTION BECAUSE OF THE COMPLEX LEGENDA SYSTEM USED IN CALCULATING VOTES NECESSARY TO WIN IN ANY PARTICULAR ELECTION (I.E., A LARGE VOTE FOR BARRETO WOULD REDUCE THE NUMBER OF VOTES NECESSARY FOR OTHER ARENA CANDIDATES TO WIN ELECTION). PUBLICLY, THERE ARE NO DECLARED MDB CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR BEYOND NON-ALIGNED RETIRED ADMIRAL MACDEO SOARES.

8. FROM THE MDB SIDE, THE MAJOR OBSTACLE TO THIS APPARENT AGREEMENT COMES FROM MDB SENATOR AND SECOND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL PARTY SATURNINO BRAGA, WHO HAD HOPED TO CONTEST FOR GOVERNOR IN A DIRECT ELECTION. THE SENATOR AND HIS FOLLOWERS FROM THE "AUTENTICO" WING OF THE MDB VIEW CHAGAS WITH CONSIDERABLE DISTASTE PERSONALLY AND ALSO REGARD HIM AS A POLITICIAN WHO WILL, IF GOVERNOR, AGAIN ACT TO SUSTAIN THE REGIME IN POWER. AUTENTICO SOURCES SAY THEY BELIEVE THAT, IN THE LIKELY EVENT THAT FIGUEIREDO (OR GEISEL) DECIDES TO REFORM THE PARTY SYSTEM, IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WHICH WOULD RESULT IN CREATION OF NEW PARTIES, CHAGAS WILL LEAD A PARTY IN RIO WHICH WILL SUPPORT THE REGIME. IN ADDITION, SOME STATE MDB OFFICIALS ARE CONCERNED THAT CHAGAS WILL DIRECT MOST OF THE STATE'S RESOURCES TOWARDS HIS POLITICAL BASE OF RIO CITY TO THE CONTINUED DETRIMENT OF CITIES IN THE INTERIOR. DESPITE ALL THIS HOWEVER, ONE DISSIDENT MDB STATE DEPUTY TOLD CONGEN

OFFICER FEBRUARY 22 THAT SATURNINO HAD STATED TO HIM THAT IF AMARAL DOES, IN FACT, NOT CHOOSE TO RUN FOR GOVERNOR, SATURNINO WILL SUPPORT CHAGAS AT THE PARTY CONVENTION.

9. BARRETO'S OPEN ADMISSION THAT CHAGAS WILL SUPPORT HIS  
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CANDIDACY FOR FEDERAL DEPUTY SUGGESTS TO US THAT GEISEL AND FIGUEIREDO HAVE CONCURRED IN THE ARRANGEMENTS CITED IN PARA 7. BARRETO IS VERY CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH GEISEL AND MOREOVER LAUNCHED FIGUEIREDO'S CANDIDACY FOR THE ARENA NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT IN A PUBLIC STATEMENT LAST YEAR. HIS CLOSE TIES TO THE PLANALTO ARE UNQUESTIONED. NEVERTHELES, IT IS TILL ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT AN ARENA CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR MIGHT BE DESIGNATED -- WITH THE HOPE THAT HIS CANDIDACY MIGHT SOMEHOW REVIVE OR INSPIRE THE PARTY ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORTERS IN THE STATE AND ENHANCE THE PARTY'S PROSPECTS IN THE NOVEMBER DIRECT ELECTIONS. RETIRED GENERAL SARMENTO SIZENO HAS BEEN FREQUENTLY MENTIONED AS ONE CONCEIVABLE ARENA CANDIDATE. (HE HIMSELF HAS GIVEN NO INDICATION PUBLICLY WHETHER HE ASPIRES TO THIS THANKLESS TASK.)

10. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THE RATHER COMPLEX ARRANGEMENTS DESCRIBED MIGHT WELL BECOME UNSTUCK PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 1. CONCEIVABLY, PRESSURES FROM THE LIBERAL SATURNINO WING OF THE MDB, BOTH IN THE STATE AND NATIONALLY, COULD FORCE CHAGAS TO STEP ASIDE FOR ONE OF HIS FOLLOWERS SUCH AS MDB REGIONAL PRESIDENT ERASMO MARTINS PEDRO WHOSE DECLARED CANDIDACY WAS WITHDRAWN ALONG WITH THAT OF SATURNINO BRAGA AS PART OF THE CHAGAS-AMARAL ACCORD. HOWEVER, AS WE STATED EARLIER, WE BELIEVE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL RESORT TO GIMMICKRY TO CREATE AN ARENA MAJORITY IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE AND THE PROBABILITIES ARE THAT RIO DE JANEIRO WILL BECOME THE ONLY STATE IN BRAZIL WITH AN OPPOSITION GOVERNOR, EVEN IF IN NAME ONLY, AS THE FIGUEIREDO ADMINISTRATION BEGINS.

11. EMBASSY CONCURS.  
DEXTER

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## Message Attributes

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